

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L NICOSIA 3870

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PFOR CY GR

SUBJ: SOME THOUGHTS ON CLERIDES' FIRST THREE MONTHS

1. SUMMARY: HERewith SOME INITIAL VIEWS ON GLAFKOS CLERIDES AS PRESIDENT: HIS METHODS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND GROWING THOUGH UNORGANIZED PUBLIC SUPPORT. END SUMMARY.

2. CLERIDES HAS MADE MUCH PROGRESS IN HIS FIRST THREE MONTHS. BUOYED BY GROWING PUBLIC REALIZATION OF HIS CONTRIBUTIONS AND GOG BACKING, HE HAS RESTORED ORDER TO GREEK CYPRUS AND STRENGTHENED HIS PERSONAL POSITION AS RALLYING POINT FOR GREEK CYPRIOTS. HE HAS MOVED TO RESOLVE CRISES THROUGH SOBER AND PRODUCTIVE NEGOTIATION, TO CALM TEMPERS IN ALL FACTIONS, TO DEPOLITICIZE GOC APPARATUS, TO INVOKE NATIONAL UNITY IN FACE OF PRESENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES. HE HAS SHOWN, IN SHORT, THAT HE CAN GOVERN AND VERY EFFECTIVELY SO.

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3. THROUGHOUT, CLERIDES HAS CAREFULLY CONTRASTED HIS DELIBERATIVE, "ABOVE-POLITICS" APPROACH WITH THAT OF MAKARIOS REGIME. MOST RECENT EXAMPLE WAS OCTOBER 29 PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH, INTER ALIA, HE PLEDGED NOT REPEAT NOT TO (1) CONTINUE EXTENSIVE WIRETAPPING OF PAST, (2) APPLY CENSORSHIP, OR (3) JUDGE CIVIL SERVANTS BY THEIR POLITICS RATHER THAN BY THEIR COMPETENCE AND DEVOTION TO DUTIES.

4. CLERIDES DEFINED HIS BASIC APPROACH TO GOVERNANCE IN OCTOBER 12 STATEMENT (FBIS TA121255Z): TOTAL OPPOSITION TO ILLEGAL SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT; NON-PROSECUTION OF THOSE INVOLVED IN COUP BECAUSE OF DANGER OF PROVOKING CIVIL WAR IN CRITICAL PERIOD OF OCCUPATION; AND CALL FOR "SPIRITUAL UNITY OF PEOPLE" TO FACE TURKISH THREAT. THEMES OF UNITY, AND CAUTION AGAINST "IRRESPONSIBLE PERSONS" WHO UNDERMINE IT, ARE LEITMOTIFS IN CLERIDES' PUBLIC REMARKS. ILLUSTRATIVELY, HIS OCTOBER 22 STATEMENT TO REFUGEE COORDINATING COMMITTEE, OCTOBER 28 OKHI DAY MESSAGE SHARPLY WARNED AGAINST INTERNAL DISCORD WHICH COULD DESTROY CYPRUS.

5. CLERIDES HAS MOVED QUICKLY TO DEPOLITICIZE, RESTORE INTEGRITY OF GOC APPARATUS. HE AND HIS MEN - E.G., UNDER SECRETARY CHRISTODOULOU, MININTERIOR KOSHIS - IN PARTICULAR HAVE LAID DOWN FIRM GUIDELINES TO POLICE, INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (KYP): TO OBSERVE LAW AT ALL TIMES, TO AVOID ALL POLITICAL INVOLVEMENTS. SIMILARLY, GOC HAS MADE EFFORTS TO BAR CIVIL SERVANTS, STUDENTS FROM BLATANT PARTISAN ACTIVITIES. SO FAR THESE EFFORTS HAVE NOT BEEN ENTIRELY SUCCESSFUL.

6. CLERIDES MAKING HEADWAY, ALBEIT SLOWLY, WITH THIS APPROACH. HE IS TRYING, IN EFFECT, TO REVERSE A GENERAL TREND OF MANY YEARS WHEREBY MAKARIOS SYSTEMATICALLY DEBAUCHED GOVERNMENT SERVICES, PROFESSIONAL GROUPS, UNIONS, EVEN SCHOOLCHILDREN FOR POLITICAL PROFIT. GENERALLY, CLERIDES AND HIS APPOINTEES HAVE PERFORMED IN FASHION ABOVE REPROACH. CLERIDES' COMMITMENT TO IMPARTIAL JUSTICE, IN PARTICULAR, HAS ENABLED HIM TO RETAIN CONFIDENCE OF FAR RIGHT. LYSSARIDES' YOWLINGS ASIDE, TONE OF PUBLIC DISCOURSE IN GREEK CYPRUS NOW LESS SHRILL THAN MONTH AGO, OR IN MAKARIOS' TIME. FOR EXAMPLE, LAST WEEK'S DEMONSTRATIONS ON EVE UNGA CYPRUS DEBATE WENT OFF WITHOUT SERIOUS INCIDENT. (GOC TOOK ELABORATE SECURITY PRECAUTIONS AROUND EMBASSY, BUT ALL GROUPS WERE ORDERLY). CLERIDES HAS BLUNTED CONTENTIOUS CHURCH DISPUTE - WHICH PLAGUED LOCAL

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POLITICS FOR PAST TWO YEARS - BY KEEPING GOC OUT OF IT.

7. MOST SEGMENTS OF GREEK CYPRUS SEEM PLEASED WITH CLERIDES' PERFORMANCE. HOWEVER, THEY USUALLY SUPPORT HIM IN TACIT FASHION; POLITICAL ORGANIZATION WHICH COULD SERVE CLERIDES IN CRUNCH HAS YET TO EMERGE. HE REMAINS A LIKED AND RESPECTED MAN WITH NO POLITICAL APPARATUS. THIS INCREASES HIS VULNERABILITY TO PRESSURE AND CRITICISM, MOST OF WHICH COME FROM LYSSARIDES CAMP.; VENOMOUS

AS EVER, AND ODD GAGGLE OF PRO-MAKARIOS FORCES WHICH REPORTEDLY FORMING "FRONT OF NATIONAL RESISTANCE" TO WORK FOR ARCHBISHOP'S RETURN. THESE GROUPS RAKE UP PAST RANCORS IN EFFORT STRIP AWAY CLERIDES' "NATIONAL UNITY" PROTECTIVE SHIELD. RECENT MAINLAND GREEK MOVES AGAINST 1967 JUNTA, FOR INSTANCE, INSPIRED LYSSARIDES AND OTHERS TO RENEW ATTACK ON CLERIDES FOR NOT REPEAT NOT CARRYING OUT "PURGE" ON CYPRUS. PRO-MAKARIOS PHILELEFTHEROS HAS JOINED TA NEA IN HIGGING HIM ON THIS ISSUE. SUCH CRITICISM GAINS FORCE AS MAKARIOS' RETURN DRAWS NEARER. UP TO NOW, CLERIDES APPEARS TO HAVE HELD HIS OWN AGAINST IT.

8. BY CONTRAST, COMMUNIST PARTY AKEL, STILL LARGEST AND BEST DISCIPLINED POLITICAL FORCE ON ISLAND, TREATS CLERIDES WITH CARE. IT CREDITS HIM WITH ACCOMPLISHMENTS, AND DOES NOT AGITATE TOO LOUDLY FOR MAKARIOS' RETURN. REALISTICALLY, AKEL CAN EXPECT TO RETAIN AND PROBABLY INCREASE ITS POLITICAL STRENGTH WHICHEVER MAN IS PRESIDENT.

9. FOR ALL HIS VIRTUES, CLERIDES LACKS CHARISMA AND NAKED THIRST FOR POWER WHICH MARKS ARCHBISHOP. IN PAST HE HAS SUFFERED FROM BEING THE PERENNIAL "CROWN PRINCE" BUT HIS AMBITION HAS CLEARLY GROWN OVER PAST THREE MONTHS AND HE SHOWS SIGNS OF FEELING THAT THE TIME IS NOW OR NEVER TO MAKE HIS PRESIDENTIAL BID. CLERIDES ALSO SHOWS MARKED DISTASTE FOR PUBLIC NASTINESS (A SINE QUA NON FOR POLITICAL SURVIVAL IN CYPRUS) AND ON OCCASION A THIN-SKINNED IRRITABILITY AT LYSSARIDES' CEASELESS NAGGING. AMIDST NEW RUMORS OF MAKARIOS' RETURN TO ISLAND LATE THIS MONTH, CLERIDES HAS RECENTLY HINTED HE WILL STEP DOWN TO LET ARCHBISHOP REOCCUPY PRESIDENTIAL CHAIR. CLERIDES' COMPARATIVELY FAR WEAKER POSITION IN TERMS OF POPULAR SUPPORT, PERSONAL MAKE-UP, RIGOROUS DEDICATION TO RULE OF LAW, LACK OF WELL-ORGANIZED POLITICAL BACKING, AND GOG AMBIVALENCE ON MAKARIOS ISSUE MAKE IT MOST IMPROBABLE THAT HE WOULD BE WILLING OR COULD WORK OPENLY TO THWART ARCHBISHOP'S RETURN. HE IS, CONFIDENTIAL

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HOWEVER, MANEUVERING TO SEE IF GOG WILLING USE INFLUENCE TO HAVE MAKARIOS GIVE UP HIS PRESIDENTIAL HAT.

10. SUMMATION: OVER PAST THREE MONTHS, CLERIDES HAS BUILT RECORD OF LIMITED, BUT SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENT: RELEASE OF PRISONERS/ DETAINEES, RESTORATION OF PUBLIC ORDER, RE-CREATION OF GOVERNMENT ENJOYING PUBLIC'S TRUST. LARGER PROBLEMS - REFUGEES, POLITICAL NEGOTIATION TOWARD SETTLEMENT, MISSING PERSONS - LIE BEFORE HIM, BUT HIS INITIAL EFFORTS GRAPPLE WITH SUCH ISSUES HAVE ENLARGED HIS HERETOFORE LIMITED PUBLIC SUPPORT. END SUMMATION. CRAWFORD

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